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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and actions in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: priority theme: challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls

Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls

Agreed conclusions

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth and fifteenth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

2. The Commission reaffirms that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocols thereto, as well as other relevant conventions and treaties, provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for the elimination and prevention of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

3. The Commission reaffirms that the full and effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

4. The Commission also reaffirms the international commitments made at relevant United Nations summits and conferences in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women, including in the Programme of Action of the

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International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation.

5. The Commission further reaffirms the commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women made at the Millennium Summit, the 2005 World Summit, the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, held in 2010, and the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, held in 2013. It also reaffirms the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: the way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.

6. The Commission acknowledges the important role played by regional conventions, instruments and initiatives and their follow-up mechanisms, in their respective regions and countries, in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls.

7. The Commission reaffirms the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", which recognized, inter alia, the vital role of women in achieving sustainable development and resolved to unlock the potential of women as drivers, agents and equal beneficiaries of sustainable development.

8. The Commission also reaffirms the commitment to the full and effective implementation of and follow-up to all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, as well as relevant resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, and recalls relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council in the area of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls. It also reaffirms its previous agreed conclusions, including, inter alia, on women and the economy and on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

9. The Commission recalls Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013) on women, peace and security and all relevant Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict, including resolutions 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012) and 2143 (2014).

10. The Commission recognizes the important role of the United Nations system, in particular of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, which contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls at the global, regional and national levels, in tracking progress of the Goals to support targeted measures in key areas of women's empowerment and in assisting States, upon their request, in their efforts.

11. The Commission reaffirms that the promotion and protection of, and respect for, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, including the right to development, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, should be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes aimed at the eradication of poverty, and also reaffirms the need to take measures to ensure that every person is entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social,

cultural and political development and that equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the promotion, protection and full realization of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

12. The Commission reaffirms that gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, their enjoyment of their human rights and the eradication of poverty are essential to economic and social development, including the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission notes the universal context of gender equality and recognizes that almost 15 years after the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, no country has achieved equality for women and girls and significant levels of inequality between women and men persist, although the Goals are important in efforts to eradicate poverty and of key importance to the international community. The Commission reaffirms the vital role of women as agents of development and recognizes that gender equality and the empowerment of women must be achieved in order to realize the unfinished business of the Goals and accelerate sustainable development beyond 2015.

13. The Commission recognizes that increasing women's economic empowerment is central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It stresses that investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth and that women's economic independence is vital to their role as full and equal partners for development and essential to the achievement of the Goals, including the eradication of poverty. The Commission recognizes that the achievement of the Goals requires the full integration of women into the formal economy, in particular into economic decision-making, which means changing the current gender-based division of labour so that women and men enjoy equal treatment.

14. The Commission recognizes that care work, both paid and unpaid, and care services are of key importance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, and further recognizes that caregiving is a critical societal function that involves shared responsibility.

15. The Commission acknowledges the important contribution of migrant women in realizing the Millennium Development Goals, and recognizes that impediments to accessing employment, vocational training, housing, schooling, health services and social services, as well as other services that, in accordance with national legislation, are intended for use by the public, contribute to the vulnerability of migrants.

16. The Commission welcomes the commitments and concerted policy action at the national, regional and global levels to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls. The Commission recognizes the innovative efforts by some countries in the implementation of the Goals for women and girls by adapting targets to local contexts and reporting on a broader range of issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women than the Goals specifically addressed, including on the human rights of women and girls.

17. The Commission welcomes progress made for women and girls in several areas of the Millennium Development Goals, and recognizes the importance of Goal 3 in signalling gender equality and women's empowerment as a global priority. It especially welcomes the significant progress made towards eliminating

gender disparity in primary education enrolment and on increasing the proportion of women in national parliaments in some regions.

18. The Commission is deeply concerned that overall progress for women and girls across all the Millennium Development Goals remains slow and uneven, including on Goal 3, both within and between countries, and that lack of progress on gender equality has hindered progress towards all of the Goals. It is especially concerned about the lack of progress for poverty-stricken regions and areas and for marginalized, vulnerable and disadvantaged women and girls and those women and girls who experience multiple forms of discrimination and inequalities of any kind.

19. The Commission notes and expresses deep concern, with regards to Millennium Development Goal 1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger), that poverty impedes women's empowerment and progress towards gender equality and that the feminization of poverty persists, and recognizes that significant gender gaps in employment rates and wages persist. The Commission is concerned that due to, inter alia, socioeconomic inequalities and persistent discrimination in labour markets, women are more likely than men to be in precarious, vulnerable, gender-stereotyped and low-paying forms of employment; bear a disproportionate share of unpaid care work; be engaged in the informal economy; and have less access to full and productive employment and decent work, social protection and pensions, which increases their risk of poverty, relative to men, particularly if they are living in households without other adult earners. It further notes that discriminatory norms contribute to women's and girls' greater vulnerability to extreme poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition and that girls and older women each face different and particular challenges. The Commission notes that current poverty eradication measures do not adequately reflect women's vulnerability to poverty, owing to inadequate data, inter alia, on income distribution within households. The Commission is further concerned that the targets on hunger also remain unmet, with adverse consequences for the health, livelihoods and well-being of women and girls. It notes the importance of food security and nutrition for achieving Goal 1 and the need to address gender gaps in the fight against hunger, and recognizes that insufficient priority is given to addressing malnutrition in women and girls.

20. The Commission notes that with regard to Millennium Development Goal 2 (achieving universal primary education), significant progress has been made in net primary school enrolments and towards eliminating gender disparity in primary education enrolment, but expresses concern that the heavy focus on numbers has resulted in less focus on completion, educational quality and learning outcomes. The Commission further notes the lack of progress in closing gender gaps in access to, retention in and completion of secondary education, which has been shown to contribute more strongly than primary school attendance to the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls and several positive social and economic outcomes. The majority of youth lacking basic education are young women. Notwithstanding the progress made, more needs to be done where progress remains uneven within groups and between countries to achieve the targets by 2015.

21. The Commission notes that with regard to Millennium Development Goal 3 (promoting gender equality and empowering women), progress has been slow, with persistent gender disparities in some regions in secondary and tertiary education enrolment; the lack of economic empowerment, autonomy and

independence for women, including a lack of integration into the formal economy, unequal access to full and productive employment and decent work, underrepresentation in non-agricultural wage employment, overrepresentation in low-paid jobs and gender-stereotyped jobs such as domestic and care work, and the lack of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; the unequal burden of unpaid care work and insufficient measures to reconcile paid work and care responsibilities; the persistence of discriminatory attitudes, norms, stereotypes and legal frameworks; insufficient social protection and insurance coverage for women; and despite progress, the low proportion and unequal participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national parliaments and other governance structures.

22. The Commission notes that with regards to Millennium Development Goal 4 (reducing child mortality), taking into account the important interconnections between women's and children's health and gender equality and the empowerment of women, significant progress has been made in reducing child mortality globally, including through the efforts to eliminate new HIV infections and vertical transmissions in children, to combat malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, hunger and anaemia, and through addressing other factors including the lack of access to vaccines, but the targets are likely to be missed. The Commission notes with deep concern that increasingly, child deaths are concentrated in the poorest regions and in the first month of life, and further expresses concern that children are at greater risk of dying before the age of 5 if they are born in rural and remote areas or to poor households. The Commission also notes with deep concern that some regions have higher female under-five mortality rates owing to discriminatory practices. The Commission recognizes that the lack of progress on reducing child mortality is linked to women's lack of access to health-care services, safe drinking water, sanitation and housing, as well as mothers' lack of basic education and nutrition.

23. The Commission notes that with regards to Millennium Development Goal 5 (improving maternal health), progress towards its two targets, reducing maternal mortality and achieving universal access to reproductive health, has been particularly slow and uneven, especially for the poorest and rural sectors of the population, within and across countries. It notes that the number of preventable maternal deaths continues to be unacceptably high and that adolescent girls face higher risks. It further expresses concern about the significant gaps in funding that remain and the magnitude of the unmet need for all sexual and reproductive health-care services, including emergency obstetric services and skilled attendance at delivery, safe and effective contraception, services for the complications of unsafe abortion, and safe abortion where such services are permitted by national law, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, among others, through the primary health-care system with effective referral to higher levels of care. The Commission further notes continuing challenges to progress, including a failure to protect and fulfil reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, poor nutrition and heavy workloads for pregnant women.

24. The Commission notes that with regards to Millennium Development Goal 6 (combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases), progress has been limited, with the number of women living with HIV increasing globally since 2001. It also notes the particular vulnerability to HIV infection of adolescent girls and

young women, as well as other women and girls who are at a higher risk. It stresses that structural gender inequalities and violence against women and girls undermine effective HIV responses and the need to give full attention to increasing the capacity of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection, including through the provision of health-care services, inter alia, sexual and reproductive health care services. It further notes the challenges faced by women and girls living with HIV and AIDS, including stigma, discrimination and violence. The Commission further notes that, despite increased global and national investments in malaria control, which have resulted in decreasing the burden of malaria in many countries and in the elimination of malaria in some countries, malaria prevention and control efforts, particularly for pregnant women, must rapidly increase in order to achieve the Goals.

25. The Commission notes that, with regard to Millennium Development Goal 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability), while progress has been made globally in access to safe drinking water, progress on access to basic sanitation has been particularly slow and the target is likely to be missed, with serious implications for women and girls, especially those living in vulnerable conditions. The Commission expresses concern that the lack of access to safe drinking water particularly affects women and girls and that they frequently bear the burden for its collection in rural and urban areas, and recognizes the need for further improvement in this regard. The Commission also notes that the lack of adequate sanitation facilities disproportionately affects women and girls, including their participation rates in the labour force and school, and increases their vulnerability to violence. The Commission further notes that women and girls are often disproportionally affected by desertification, deforestation, natural disasters and climate change owing to gender inequalities and the dependence of many women on natural resources for their livelihoods.

26. The Commission notes with regard to Millennium Development Goal 8 (developing a global partnership for development) that the development resources, including official development assistance, in support of gender equality and women's empowerment are essential and remain inadequate to the task. The Commission also notes that the global economic crisis and the shifts to austerity measures taken by some countries have impacted women and girls negatively, with a reduction in investment in social sectors. It also notes that a gender gap in access to information and communications technologies persists.

27. The Commission is concerned that several indicators to monitor the Millennium Development Goals are not disaggregated by sex, age and other factors and therefore do not provide sufficient information about the situation of women and girls throughout their life cycle, including indicators on poverty, hunger, environmental sustainability and a global partnership for development, while others are still limited, such as those related to Goal 3 (promoting gender equality and empowering women) and Goal 6 (combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases).

28. The Commission is concerned that several critical issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women were not adequately addressed by the Millennium Development Goals such as, inter alia: violence against women and girls; child, early and forced marriage; women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid work, particularly unpaid care work; women's access to decent work, the

gender wage gap, employment in the informal sector, low-paid and gender-stereotyped work such as domestic and care work; women's equal access to, control and ownership of assets and productive resources, including land, energy and fuel, and women's inheritance rights; women's sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences; universal health coverage; non-communicable diseases; accountability for violations of human rights of women and girls; and women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels. The Commission recognizes that unless all dimensions of gender inequality are addressed, gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of the human rights of women and girls cannot be achieved.

29. The Commission recognizes that progress on the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals for women and girls has been held back owing to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty and inequalities and disadvantages in access to resources and opportunities that limit women's and girls' capabilities, and growing gaps in equality of opportunity, discriminatory laws, policies, social norms, attitudes, harmful customary and contemporary practices and gender stereotypes.

30. The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and girls. It expresses deep concern that discrimination and violence against women and girls continue to occur in all parts of the world and that that all forms of violence against women and girls are impediments to the development of their full potential as equal partners with men and boys in all aspects of life, as well as obstacles to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

31. The Commission welcomes international momentum to address the issue of child, early and forced marriage. The Commission recognizes that child, early and forced marriage is a harmful practice, and notes that its continued prevalence, among other factors, has slowed the achievement of several of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls.

32. The Commission emphasizes that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including the eradication of poverty and hunger, and that the implementation of special measures, as appropriate, aimed at empowering women can help accomplish this. It recognizes that inequality is a concern for all countries and that it represents an urgent challenge with multiple implications for the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights of women and girls. It also emphasizes that women's poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, to the lack of access to economic and productive resources, to quality education and support services and to women's minimal participation in the decision-making process. The Commission further recognizes that women's poverty and lack of empowerment as well as their exclusion from social and economic policies can place them at increased risk of violence and that violence against women impedes social and economic development, as well as the achievement of the Goals.

33. The Commission is also concerned that countries affected by natural disasters are less likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and further notes that women and girls are disproportionately affected by natural disasters. It further recognizes that women play a vital role in disaster risk reduction, response

and recovery, including rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the need to enhance women's access, capacities and opportunities to effectively and equally participate in the prevention and preparedness efforts and in response to disasters.

34. The Commission is deeply concerned that climate change poses a challenge to the achievement of sustainable development and that women and girls are disproportionately affected by the impacts of desertification, deforestation and natural disasters, persistent drought, extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification, is also deeply concerned that the adverse impacts of climate change on women and girls, especially those living in poverty, can be exacerbated by gender inequality and discrimination, expresses profound alarm that greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise globally, remains deeply concerned that all countries, particularly developing countries, are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and are already experiencing increased impacts, including persistent drought and extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification, which further threaten food security and efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development and in this regard, emphasizes that adaptation to climate change represents an immediate and urgent global priority.

35. The Commission expresses deep concern about the ongoing adverse impacts, particularly on development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, of the world financial and economic crisis, recognizing evidence of an uneven and fragile recovery, and cognizant that the global economy, notwithstanding significant efforts that helped contain tail risks, improve financial market conditions and sustain recovery, still remains in a challenging phase, with downside risks, inter alia, for women and girls, including high volatility in global markets, high unemployment, particularly among youth, indebtedness in some countries and widespread fiscal strains that pose challenges for global economic recovery and reflect the need for additional progress towards sustaining and rebalancing global demand, and stresses the need for continuing efforts to address systemic fragilities and imbalances and to reform and strengthen the international financial system while implementing the reforms agreed to date, and with respect to maintaining adequate levels of funding for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

36. The Commission acknowledges that the global burden and threat of non-communicable diseases constitutes one of the major challenges for sustainable development in the twenty-first century, which may have a direct impact on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It further notes that developing countries bear a disproportionate burden and that non-communicable diseases can affect women and men differently.

37. The Commission further recognizes that progress on the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls has been limited owing to the lack of systematic gender mainstreaming and integration of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Goals. The Commission also recognizes that effective gender-responsive monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals has been limited as a result of a lack of investment in, and the lack of consistent collection and use of, reliable, integrated gender indicators, statistics and data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, location and other relevant factors, and that goals, targets and indicators, including gender sensitive indicators,

are valuable in measuring and accelerating progress, and are enhanced by voluntarily sharing information, knowledge and experience. The Commission acknowledges in this regard the importance of civil registration systems and vital statistics.

38. The Commission also recognizes that insufficient priority given to and significant underinvestment in gender equality and the empowerment of women in the realization of the human rights of women and girls continue to limit progress on the Millennium Development Goals for girls and women of all ages, their families and communities, and for the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It stresses that the available resources, through domestic resource mobilization and official development assistance, and their allocation, remain a concern and are often inadequate to the task.

39. The Commission acknowledges the strategic and coordinating role of national machineries for the advancement of women, which should be placed at the highest possible level in government, for the achievement of gender equality and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, and the need to endow these machineries with the necessary human and sufficient financial resources to enable them to function effectively. The Commission also acknowledges the contribution of national human rights institutions where they exist.

40. The Commission acknowledges the major contributions made by civil society, including women's and community-based organizations and feminist groups in placing the interests, needs and visions of women on national, regional and international agendas.

41. The Commission recognizes that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated and that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis, and stresses that, while the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

42. The Commission urges governments, at all levels, and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites national human rights institutions where they exist, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector, employer organizations, trade unions, media and other relevant actors, as applicable, to take the following actions:

A. Realizing women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights

(a) Consider ratifying or acceding to, as a particular matter of priority, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the respective optional protocols thereto, limit the extent of any reservations, formulate any such reservations as precisely and as narrowly as possible to ensure that no reservations are incompatible

with the object and purpose of the conventions, review their reservations regularly with a view to withdrawing them and withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the relevant convention, and implement them fully by, inter alia, putting in place effective national legislation and policies;

(b) Accelerate full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for their further implementation and the outcomes of their review conferences in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls;

(c) Eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls through the development, where needed, adoption and accelerated and effective implementation and monitoring of laws and comprehensive policy measures; the removal, where they exist, of discriminatory provisions in legal frameworks, including punitive provisions; and setting up legal, policy, administrative and other comprehensive measures, including temporary special measures, as appropriate, to ensure women's and girls' equal and effective access to justice and accountability for violations of the human rights of women and girls;

(d) Implement concrete and long-term measures to transform discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes, including those that limit women's roles to being mothers and caregivers, and eliminate harmful practices including, inter alia, female genital mutilation and honour crimes, in order to achieve gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and the full realization of the human rights of women and girls;

(e) Fully engage men and boys, including community leaders, as strategic partners and allies in the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls both in the family and in society, design and implement national policies that aim to transform those social norms that condone violence against women and girls, and work to counteract attitudes by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys, including by understanding and addressing the root causes of gender inequality such as unequal power relations, social norms, practices and stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination against women and girls, and engage them in efforts to promote and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(f) Acknowledge publicly the important and legitimate role of women human rights defenders in the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and development and take appropriate, robust and practical steps to protect them;

(g) Adopt and implement specific and targeted measures recognizing that some women experience increased vulnerability and marginalization due to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities;

(h) Take all appropriate measures to adopt and implement disability-inclusive national development strategies and legislative, administrative, social, educational and other measures to protect and promote the rights of women and girls with disabilities, as persons with disabilities are more vulnerable to discrimination and violence and are still largely invisible in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals;

(i) Encourage the participation of indigenous women and girls in the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples to be held in 2014, noting the contribution that the conference can make towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals and bearing in mind that indigenous women and girls face particular challenges in achieving the Millennium Development Goals;

(j) Enact and implement legislation to protect, support and empower child-headed households, in particular those headed by girls, and include provisions to ensure their economic well-being, access to health-care services, nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, shelter and education, and inheritance, and ensure that those families are protected, supported and assisted to stay together;

(k) Address the multiple and intersecting factors contributing to the disproportionate impact of poverty on women and girls over their life cycle, as well as intra-household gender inequalities in the allocation of resources, opportunities and power, by realizing women's and girls' civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, and ensure women's and girls' inheritance and property rights, equal access to quality education, equal access to justice, social protection, and an adequate standard of living, including food security and nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, energy and fuel resources and housing, as well as women's and adolescent girls' access to health, including sexual and reproductive health-care services, and women's equal access to full and productive employment and decent work, women's full participation and integration in the formal economy, equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and equal sharing of unpaid work;

(l) Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spaces, through multisectoral and coordinated approaches to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and exercise due diligence, investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls and end impunity, and provide protection as well as universal access to comprehensive social, health and legal services for all victims and survivors, to ensure their full recovery and reintegration into society and, bearing in mind the importance for all women and girls of living free from violence, to address the structural and underlying causes of violence against women and girls through enhanced prevention measures, research and strengthened coordination and monitoring and evaluation;

(m) Eliminate all harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, through reviewing, adopting, enacting and enforcing laws and regulations that prohibit such practices, creating awareness around their harmful health consequences, and generating social support for the enforcement of such laws;

(n) Strengthen bilateral, regional and international cooperation for the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including by implementing the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and take appropriate measures to raise public awareness of the issue of trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, including the factors that make women and girls vulnerable to trafficking; to discourage, with a view to eliminating, the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation and

forced labour; to review and adopt laws, regulations and penalties necessary to deal with this issue and publicize them to emphasize that trafficking is a serious crime; and encourage media providers, including Internet service providers, to adopt or strengthen self-regulatory measures to promote the responsible use of media, particularly the Internet, with a view to eliminating the exploitation of women and children;

(o) Ensure the promotion and protection of the human rights of all women and their sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, including through the development and enforcement of policies and legal frameworks and the strengthening of health systems that make universally accessible and available quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health-care services, commodities, information and education, including, inter alia, safe and effective methods of modern contraception, emergency contraception, prevention programmes for adolescent pregnancy, maternal health care such as skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care which will reduce obstetric fistula and other complications of pregnancy and delivery, safe abortion where such services are permitted by national law, and prevention and treatment of reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and reproductive cancers, recognizing that human rights include the right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free from coercion, discrimination and violence;

(p) Ensure universal access to comprehensive prevention, affordable treatment, care and support services for HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, free of stigma and discrimination, with a gender perspective, and provide comprehensive information, voluntary counselling and testing to young women and adolescent girls living with and affected by HIV and AIDS;

(q) Develop, implement and support national prevention, care and treatment strategies to effectively address obstetric fistula, using a multisectoral, multidisciplinary, comprehensive and integrated approach in order to bring about lasting solutions;

(r) Encourage partnerships for global health to support Member States in carrying out their responsibilities, including in moving towards universal health coverage, which implies that all people, including women and girls, have access, without discrimination, to nationally determined sets of the promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative basic health services, to needed and essential, safe, affordable, effective and quality medicines, and vaccines, especially through the promotion of primary health care, while ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the users to financial hardship, with a specific emphasis on the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized segments of the population, and calls upon Member States to strengthen and improve the quality of health systems in this regard;

(s) Develop comprehensive strategies to target gender inequality in health care and put into practice policies to ensure equal access for women, adolescents and youth to affordable and adequate health-care services, including primary health care and basic nutrition;

(t) Pursue and promote gender-based approaches for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, founded on data disaggregated by sex and age in an effort to address the critical differences in the risks of morbidity and mortality from non-communicable diseases for women and men;

(u) Promote and protect women's and girls' right to education on the basis of equal opportunity and non-discrimination throughout their life cycle at all levels and promote equal and inclusive access to quality early childhood, primary, secondary and post-secondary education, non-formal education, catch-up and adult literacy education for those who did not receive formal education, skills development and vocational training and human rights education and training, with specific attention to eliminating gender disparities at all levels of education by increasing the retention, transition and completion rates of women and girls; improving the quality of education and learning outcomes; eliminating gender stereotypes in the curriculum; mainstreaming a gender perspective into education and training programmes, including science and technology; eradicating female illiteracy and supporting school-to-work transition through skills development to enable their active participation in economic, social and cultural development, governance and decision-making;

(v) Adopt targeted measures to ensure girls' safety and an environment free from sexual harassment in school and in the commute to and from school, including by improving transportation, strengthening infrastructure by providing separate and adequate sanitation facilities, improved lighting, playgrounds and other safe environments, conducting violence prevention activities in schools and communities, and establishing and enforcing penalties for all forms of violence and harassment against girls;

(w) Promote the right to education by making primary education compulsory and available free to all children and through the progressive introduction of subsidized education, bearing in mind the need for special measures to ensure equal access, including affirmative action to contribute to achieving equal opportunity and combating exclusion and ensuring school attendance, in particular for girls and children from low-income families and children who become heads of households;

(x) Develop and implement educational programmes and teaching materials, including comprehensive evidence-based education for human sexuality, based on full and accurate information, for all adolescents and youth, in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities, with the appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the involvement of children, adolescents, youth and communities, and in coordination with women's, youth and specialized non-governmental organizations, in order to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women of all ages, to eliminate prejudices and to promote and build informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills for the development of respectful relationships, and based on gender equality and human rights, as well as teacher education and training programmes for both formal and non-formal education;

(y) With the support of international organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, develop policies and programmes, giving priority to formal, informal and non-formal education, that support girls and enable them to acquire knowledge, develop self-esteem and take responsibility for their own lives, and to place special focus on programmes to educate women and

men, especially parents, about the importance of girls' physical and mental health and well-being, including the elimination of discrimination and violence against girls;

(z) Ensure women's right to work and rights at work through gender-responsive policies and programmes that promote women's economic empowerment, including decent work for all, promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, invest in and empower women in productive sectors of the economy, support women's technical, managerial and entrepreneurial capacities, promote collective bargaining, address the gendered division of labour, prohibit and redress sexual harassment, prevent discrimination against women in the workplace, support the reconciliation of paid work with family and care responsibilities for both women and men, and promote women's full and equal participation in the formal economy, in particular in economic decision-making, and empower women in the informal economy, with particular attention to women domestic workers, who are entitled to the same basic rights as other workers, including protection from violence and abuse, fair terms of employment, and a safe and healthy working environment;

(aa) Guarantee women's and girls' inheritance rights and their full and equal access to and control over assets and natural and other productive resources, including full and equal rights to own and lease land and other property, and undertake administrative reforms and all necessary measures to give women the same right as men to credit, capital, finance, financial assets, science and technology, vocational training, information and communications technologies and markets, and to ensure equal access to justice and legal assistance;

(bb) Encourage States and relevant civil society groups to empower women and girls by supporting programmes that facilitate participation through public and private investment in agriculture and that aim to achieve food security and nutrition;

(cc) Recognize, resource and support programmes that advance gender equality and women's rights in all areas of economic activities, including fisheries and aquaculture, to address food security and nutrition, and meaningfully facilitate women's contributions to small-scale and artisan fisheries and aquaculture, commercial fisheries, and the use of and care for oceans and seas;

(dd) Ensure non-discriminatory access for women of all ages to gender-responsive, universally accessible, available, affordable, sustainable and high quality services and infrastructure, including health care, safe drinking water and sanitation, transport, energy, housing, agricultural technology, financial and legal services, and information and communications technologies;

(ee) Invest in closing the gender gap in information and communications technologies by making them affordable and accessible, including as regards access to broadband as a tool for the empowerment of women and girls and the exercise of their full range of human rights, access to information, access to markets, networking and increased opportunities;

(ff) Promote universal social protection across the life cycle, including for older women, that gives women and girls protection against risks and vulnerabilities and promotes their social inclusion and full enjoyment of all human rights;

(gg) Recognize that caregiving is a critical societal function and therefore emphasize the need to value, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work by prioritizing social protection policies, including accessible and affordable social services, including care services for children, persons with disabilities, older persons, and persons living with HIV and AIDS, and all others in need of care; the development of infrastructure, including access to environmentally sound time-and-energy-saving technologies; employment policies, including family-friendly policies with maternity and paternity leave and benefits; and the promotion of the equal sharing of responsibilities and chores between men and women in caregiving and domestic work in order to reduce the domestic work burden of women and girls and to change the attitudes that reinforce the division of labour based on gender;

(hh) Recognize the family as a contributor to sustainable development, including in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals for women and girls, that gender equality and women's empowerment improve the well-being of the family, and in this regard stress the need for elaborating and implementing family policies aimed at achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and at enhancing the full participation of women in society;

(ii) Promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, especially those of women and children, and to address international migration through international, regional or bilateral cooperation and dialogue and through a comprehensive and balanced approach, recognizing the roles and responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination in promoting and protecting the human rights of all migrants, and avoiding approaches that might aggravate their vulnerability;

B. Strengthening the enabling environment for gender equality and the empowerment of women

(jj) Work towards ensuring that global trade, financial and investment agreements are conducive to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls, and complement national development efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, including through reaffirming the critical role of an open, equitable, rules-based, predictable, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, and strengthen the effectiveness of the global economic system's support for development by encouraging the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into development policies at all levels in all sectors;

(kk) Underline commitments to strengthen national efforts, including with the support of international cooperation, aimed at addressing the rights and needs of women and girls affected by natural disasters, armed conflicts, other complex humanitarian emergencies, trafficking in persons and terrorism, within the context of actions geared towards the realization of the internationally agreed goals and commitments related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, including the Millennium Development Goals, recognizing the challenges they face, and also underline the need to take concerted actions in conformity with international law to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the rights of women and girls living under foreign occupation, so as to ensure the achievement of the above-mentioned goals and commitments, recognizing the challenges they face;

(ll) Implement macroeconomic policies that, together with labour and social policies, promote full and productive employment and decent work for all and gender equality and the empowerment of women, in order to enhance economic efficiency and optimize the contribution of women to economic growth and poverty reduction, and increase awareness among decision makers, the private sector and employers of the necessity of women's economic empowerment and their important contribution;

(mm) Strengthen the role of women in formal and informal sectors, including in cross-border trade and agriculture, put in place measures needed to improve women's access to markets and productive resources, make markets safe for women, including those living in rural areas, and thereby ensure that women- and men-owned businesses and farms have equal opportunities in markets;

(nn) Identify and develop strategies to expand trade opportunities for women producers and facilitate the active participation of women in national, regional and global trade;

(oo) Take measures to ensure that, in global and national policy responses to financial and economic crises and to excessive volatile food and energy prices, any negative impacts on gender equality and the empowerment of women are minimized, including on employment and funding for essential services and social protection systems, that particular support is given to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable persons, and that gender equality and the empowerment of women continue to be promoted, including the protection of the human rights of women and girls;

(pp) Refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries;

(qq) Prioritize and mainstream gender equality perspectives in all social, economic and environmental policies and programmes to implement the Millennium Development Goals, including national development policies and strategies to eradicate poverty, and gender-responsive budgeting and public expenditure allocation processes, establish and strengthen institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming at the local, national and regional levels, and promote and ensure the implementation of national legal frameworks and coordination between branches of government to ensure gender equality;

(rr) Promote equal opportunities and the full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of people-centred sustainable development, and reaffirm that the eradication of poverty on the basis of sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice requires the involvement of women in economic and social development;

(ss) Adopt measures to implement and monitor the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, and women and girls affected by violent extremism, and ensure women's effective participation at all levels and at all stages and in peace processes and mediation efforts, conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and recovery, as laid out in relevant Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and in this regard support the involvement of women's organizations and

civil society organizations; end impunity by ensuring accountability and punishing perpetrators of the most serious crimes against women and girls under national and international law, and ensure that alleged perpetrators of those crimes are held accountable under national justice or, where applicable, international justice;

(tt) Promote the integration of a gender perspective in environmental and climate change policies and strengthen mechanisms and provide adequate resources to ensure women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies and policies related to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events and slow onset impacts, including drought, ocean acidification, sea-level rise and loss of biodiversity, on the lives of women and girls, and ensure a comprehensive approach to address the hardships faced by women and girls by integrating their specific needs into humanitarian response to natural disasters and into the planning, delivery and monitoring of disaster risk reduction policies to address natural disasters and climate change, and ensuring sustainable management of natural resources;

(uu) Strengthen international cooperation in technology and innovation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, including through public-private partnerships;

(vv) Strengthen and support the contributions of rural women to the agricultural sector and to enhancing agricultural and rural development, including small-scale farming, and ensure that women have equal access to agricultural technologies, through investments and the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, and innovation in small-scale agricultural production and distribution, and address the existing gaps in and barriers to trading their agricultural products in local, regional and international markets;

(ww) Strengthen international cooperation, including the role of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation, and invites all Member States to enhance South-South and triangular cooperation focusing on shared development priorities with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in government, civil society and the private sector, while noting that national ownership and leadership in this regard are indispensable for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(xx) Recognize the important role the media can play in the elimination of gender stereotypes, and to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, increase the participation and access of women to all forms of media, and encourage the media to increase public awareness of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

C. Maximizing investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women

(yy) Increase and ensure the effectiveness of financial resources across all sectors to achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization and enjoyment of women's and girls' human rights through mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including domestic resource mobilization and allocation

and increased priority to gender equality in official development assistance, and the creation of voluntary innovative financing mechanisms, as appropriate;

(zz) Urge developed countries that have not yet done so, in accordance with their commitments, to make concrete efforts towards meeting the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to least developed countries, and encourage developing countries to build on the progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help meet development goals and targets and help them, inter alia, to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(aaa) Recognize that the long-term sustainability of debt depends on, inter alia, economic growth, the mobilization of domestic and international resources, the export prospects of debtor countries, sustainable debt management, sound macroeconomic policies that also support job creation, transparent and effective regulatory frameworks and success in overcoming structural development problems, and hence on the creation of an enabling international environment that is conducive to sustainable development, gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(bbb) Support and institutionalize a gender-sensitive approach to public financial management, including gender-responsive budgeting across all sectors of public expenditure, to address gaps in resourcing for gender equality and women's empowerment, and ensure all national and sectoral plans and policies for gender equality and the empowerment of women are fully costed and adequately resourced to ensure their effective implementation;

(ccc) Monitor and evaluate the impact of all economic decision-making on gender equality, including public sector expenditures, austerity measures, where they apply, public-private partnerships and investments, and official development assistance, and take corrective action to prevent discriminatory impacts and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women, including by ensuring the promotion of women's full and equal participation in economic decision-making structures;

(ddd) Increase resources and support for grass-roots, local, national, regional and global women's and civil society organizations to advance and promote gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls;

D. Strengthening the evidence base for gender equality and the empowerment of women

(eee) Improve systematic and coordinated collection, analysis, dissemination and use of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other relevant variables at the national level, through appropriate financial and technical support and capacity-building, while recognizing the need for international cooperation in this regard;

(fff) Collect regularly and disseminate statistics on the minimum set of gender indicators and the core set of violence against women indicators adopted by the Statistical Commission in 2013;

(ggg) Continue to develop and enhance standards and methodologies, for use at the national and international levels, to improve data, inter alia, on women's poverty, income distribution within households, unpaid care work, women's access to, control and ownership of assets and productive resources, and women's participation at all levels of decision-making, including to monitor progress on the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls;

(hhh) Develop and strengthen national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess policies and programmes to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls and promote the sharing of best practices;

E. Ensuring women's participation and leadership at all levels and strengthening accountability

(iii) Take measures to ensure women's full, equal and effective participation in all fields and leadership at all levels of decision-making in the public and private sectors through policies and actions such as temporary special measures, as appropriate, and by setting and working to achieve concrete goals, targets and benchmarks;

(jjj) Strengthen the participation in and contributions of women in decision-making processes on national, regional and global trade;

(kkk) Ensure the effective participation of women's and youth and other relevant civil society organizations in the design, continued implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and take into account their views in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

(lll) Develop and implement effective measures to account for the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of the human rights of women and girls;

(mmm) Strengthen institutional arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls, ensure transparency, in this regard, by making available relevant information and support women's full and effective participation and leadership in monitoring.

43. The Commission urges States to build on the lessons from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals as the new post-2015 development agenda is being shaped. It urges States to tackle critical remaining challenges through a transformative and comprehensive approach and calls for gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls to be reflected as a stand-alone goal and to be integrated through targets and indicators into all goals of any new development framework.

44. The Commission also urges all States and all other stakeholders to undertake comprehensive national and regional level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly so that the outcomes of these reviews can effectively feed into its fifty-ninth session, to be held in 2015. The Commission especially encourages all stakeholders to analyse current challenges and identify opportunities for

accelerating actions to achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of the human rights of women and girls, and to undertake appropriate commemorative activities for the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.